

priority to Serial No. 60/073,156 filed January 30, 1998, each of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 12 of the specification with the following rewritten paragraph:

--When taken up by a cell, the gene constructs of the invention may remain present in the cell as a functioning extrachromosomal molecule or it may integrate into the cell's chromosomal DNA. Nucleic acid, such as DNA, may be introduced into cells where it remains as separate genetic material in the form of a plasmid. Alternatively, linear nucleic acid that can integrate into the chromosome may be introduced into the cell. When introducing nucleic acid into the cell, reagents which promote nucleic acid integration into chromosomes may be added. DNA sequences which are useful to promote integration may also be included in the DNA molecule. Alternatively, RNA may be administered to the cell. It is also contemplated to provide the gene construct as a linear minichromosome including a centromere, telomeres and an origin of replication.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 22 of the specification with the following rewritten paragraph:

--According to the present invention, the gene construct comprises recombinant nucleic acid molecules comprising a nucleotide coding sequence that encodes a HCV nonstructural protein. In some preferred embodiments, the recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide coding sequence that encodes NS3. In other preferred embodiments, the recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide coding sequence that encodes a HCV nonstructural protein that comprises NS4. In other preferred embodiments, the recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide coding sequence that encodes a HCV nonstructural protein that comprises NS5. In other preferred embodiments, the recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide coding sequence that encodes any combination of HCV nonstructural proteins including NS3, NS4, and NS5.--